

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-11 and 17 remain pending after amendment.

Claim Amendments

By this amendment, claims 12-15 are cancelled. No new matter is added by this amendment.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants acknowledge with thanks the indication of allowability of the subject matter of claims 1, 3-11 and 17.

Rejection under 35 USC 103(a) over Sasaki

Claims 12-15 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sasaki U.S. Patent No. 6,187,939. This rejection respectfully is traversed to the extent deemed to apply to the claims as amended.

In response to the rejection, claims 12-15 are cancelled. In view of the cancellation of the rejected claims, the rejection is moot and should be withdrawn.

The application is now believed to be in condition for allowance. Accordingly, entry of this amendment and early indication of same are earnestly solicited.

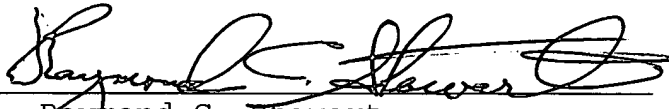
In the event that any outstanding matters remain in this application, Applicants request that the Examiner contact James W. Hellwege (Reg. No. 28,808) at (703) 205-8000 to discuss such matters.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Very truly yours,

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By


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RCS/JWH/sh

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